

Drunk Driving

In 1999, 15,786 alcohol-related fatalities occurred, or 38% of the total traffic fatalities for the year. (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). 2000. *Traffic Safety Facts 1999, Alcohol*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation.)

For fatal crashes occurring between midnight and 3 a.m., 76% involved alcohol. (Ibid.)

In 1999, 29% of all fatal crashes during the week were alcohol-related, compared to 51% on weekends. For all crashes, the alcohol involvement rate was 5% during the week and 13% during the weekend. (Ibid.)

Intoxication rates for vehicle operators involved in fatal crashes in 1999 were highest for motorcycles (28%), followed by light trucks (20%), passenger cars (17%), and large trucks (1%). (Ibid.)

An estimated 308,000 persons were injured in crashes where police reported that alcohol was present—an average of one person injured approximately every two minutes. (Ibid.)

In 1999, 30% of all traffic fatalities occurred in crashes in which at least one driver or nonoccupant had a BAC (blood alcohol concentration) of 0.10 or greater. Seventy percent of the 12,321 people killed in such crashes were themselves intoxicated. (Ibid.)

The 15,786 fatalities in alcohol-related crashes during 1999 represent an average of one alcohol-related fatality every thirty-three minutes. (Ibid.)

All states and the District of Columbia now have 21-year-old minimum age drinking

laws. NHTSA estimates that these laws have reduced traffic fatalities involving drivers eighteen to twenty years old by 13% and have saved an estimated 19,121 lives since 1975. In 1999, an estimated 901 lives were saved by minimum drinking age laws. (Ibid.)

The rate of alcohol involvement in fatal crashes is more than three times as high at night as during the day (60% vs. 17%). For all crashes, the alcohol involvement rate is more than five times as high at night (17% vs. 3%). (Ibid.)

The highest intoxication rates in fatal crashes were recorded for drivers ages 21–24 (27%), followed by ages 25–34 (24%), and ages 35–44 (21%). (Ibid.)

In 1999, 21% of the children under fifteen years old who were killed in motor vehicle crashes were killed in alcohol-related crashes. (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). 2000. *Traffic Safety Facts 1999, Children*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation.)

Of the children 0–14 years old who were killed in alcohol-related crashes during 1999, almost half (250) were passengers in vehicles with drivers who had been drinking, with BAC levels of 0.01 or higher. (Ibid.)

In 1999, there was an estimated total of 1,511,300 (up from the 1998 figure of 968,868) arrests for driving under the influence of alcohol. (Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). 15 October 2000. *Crime in the United States, Uniform Crime Reports, 1999*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 211.)

Note: OVC makes no representation concerning the accuracy of data from non-Department of Justice sources.

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